Cotton/Soybean Insect Newsletter

Volume 16, Issue #5 Edisto Research & Education Center in Blackville, SC 28 May 2021

Pest Patrol Alerts

The information contained herein each issue is available via text alerts that direct users to online recordings. I will update the short message often for at least as long as the newsletter runs. After a new message is posted, a text message is sent to alert users that I have recorded a new update. Users can subscribe for text message alerts for my updates in two easy steps. Step one: register by texting **pestpat7** to 97063. Step two: reply to the confirmation text you receive by texting the letter "y" to complete your registration. Pest Patrol Alerts are sponsored by Syngenta.

Updates on Twitter

When noteworthy events happen the in the field, I will be sending them out quickly via Twitter. If you want to follow those quick updates, follow me at **@bugdocisin** on Twitter.

News from Around the State

Charles Davis, county agent covering Calhoun and Richland Counties, reported "bugs are the least of our worries this week. Dryland cotton is catching it pretty hard. Heat and wind are making life tough for an emerging cotton plant. Other than a few hoppers and a little of the usual thrips damage, I haven't seen anything in the field other than deer." **Tom Smith**, a local crop consultant, reported seeing "no shortage of various brown stink bug species in corn fields at various growth stages." Below are some photos from Tom. It is looking like we might have a big stink bug year in cotton and soybeans.



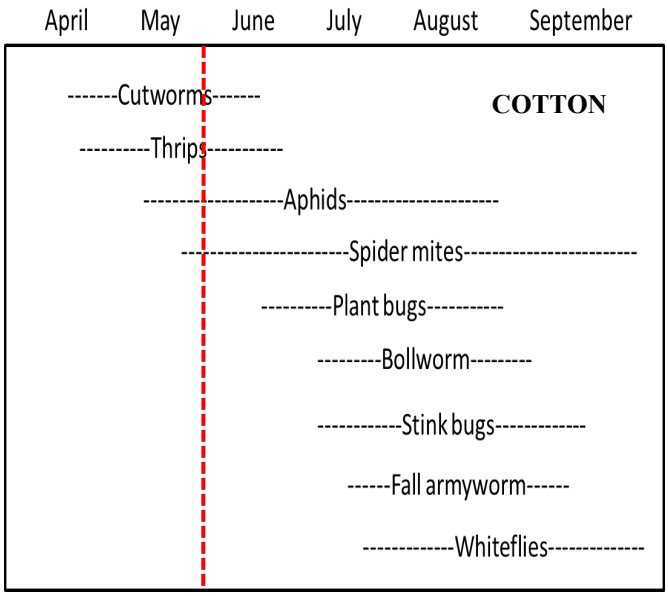

Scouting Workshops and Field Days

We going to offer several in-field, in-person workshops devoted to scouting for insect issues in cotton and soybeans. These scouting workshops are being scheduled for late July 2021. We will continue to update on progress in planning for those workshops. We are planning to have an in-person field day here at the Edisto REC on 2 September 2021, with at least row crops (cotton, soybeans, peanuts, corn, grain sorghum, etc.) covered. Stay tuned for details on those events.

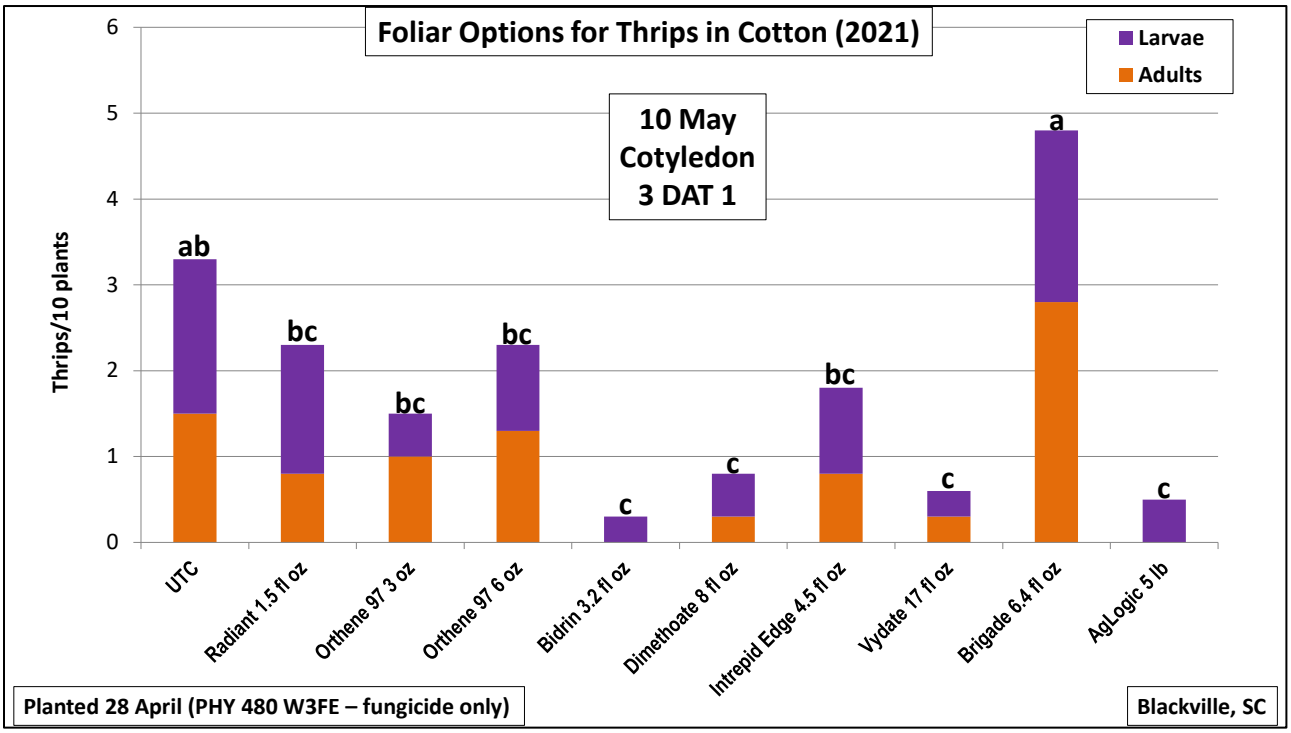
Cotton Situation

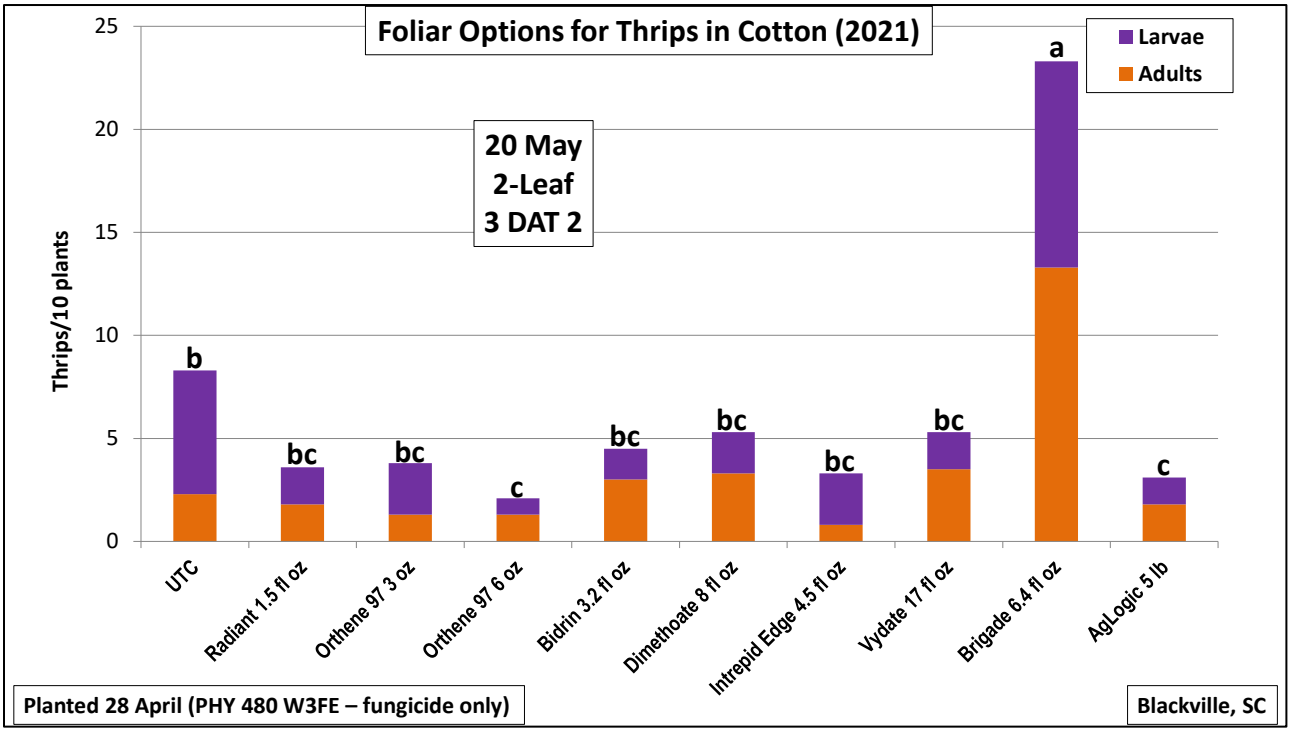
As of 23 May 2021, the USDA NASS South Carolina Statistical Office estimated that about 73% of the crop has been planted, compared with 59% at this time last week, 54% at this time last year, and 64% for the 5-year average. The conditions of the crop were 4% excellent, 44% good, 37% fair, 12% poor, and 3% very poor. These are observed/perceived state-wide averages.

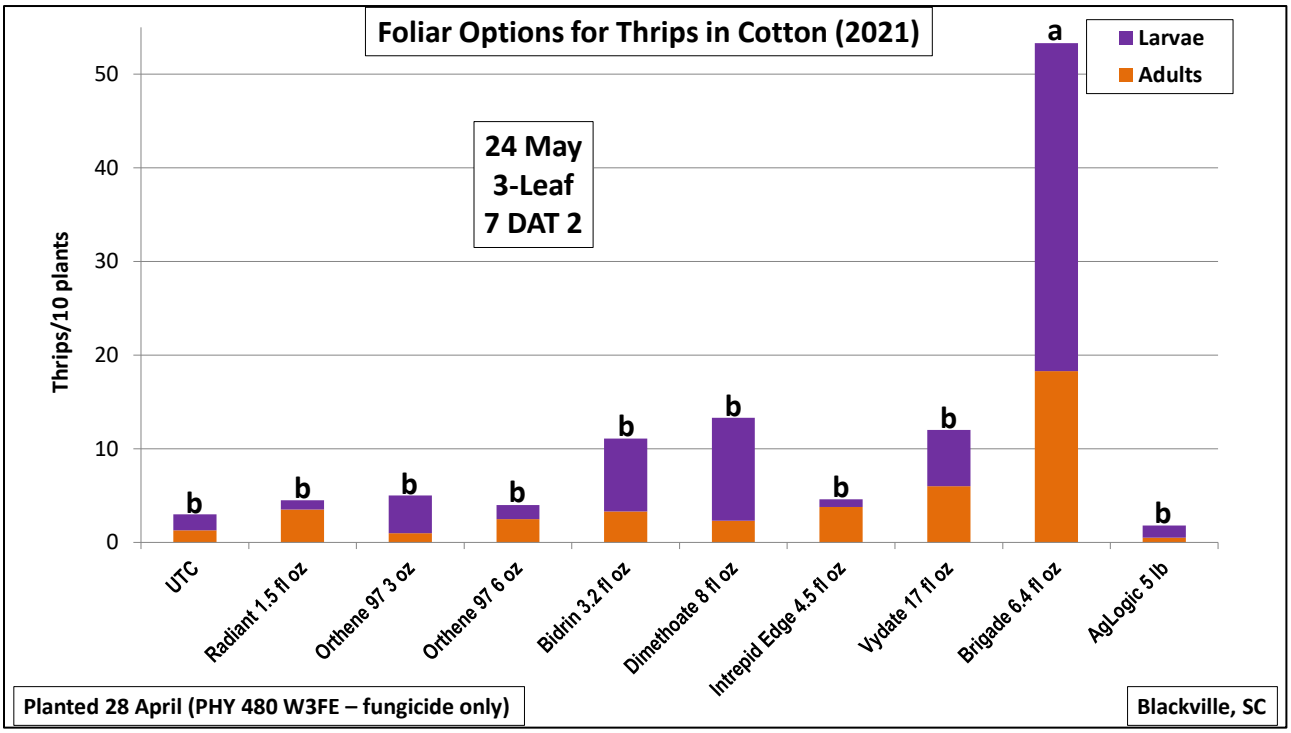
Cotton Insects



As you know, the real problem right now is the dry, hot weather, but insects don't stop being pests because of that. Thankfully, the 2021 "thrips season" hasn't been that bad (generally speaking), unless you are still disking and bedding land. You might be experiencing very high numbers on land prepared that way. The bedding operation is not the important factor, but the disking (broadly turning over the soil) is what makes the difference. For various reasons (some known and some unknown), thrips numbers in my trials using disked land are **MUCH** higher than in my trials where we used a strip-till rig to prepare land. We have observed this before and published the observations. In the absence of vegetation residue (desiccated cover crop or weeds) (i.e. where you disk), issues with thrips can be increased. It is thought that the visual acuity of thrips for seedling cotton on bare ground is enhanced, and that residue left by minimum tillage interferes with visual perception of thrips. There might be a few other factors (e.g. chemicals from residue, etc.), but there is a real difference in thrips pressure based on the type of tillage. I will be going back to disking areas for thrips trials. Below are some results from our 2021 thrips trial in cotton testing many of the foliar insecticide options for controlling thrips. I will show some data from trials on disked land next week to demonstrate increased numbers of thrips. So, many of you are using IPM strategies for thrips control by using minimum tillage and maybe altering your planting date some based on risk. These are cultural control strategies! Good job! I need to do a better job of messing up to get more pressure in my trials. ☺

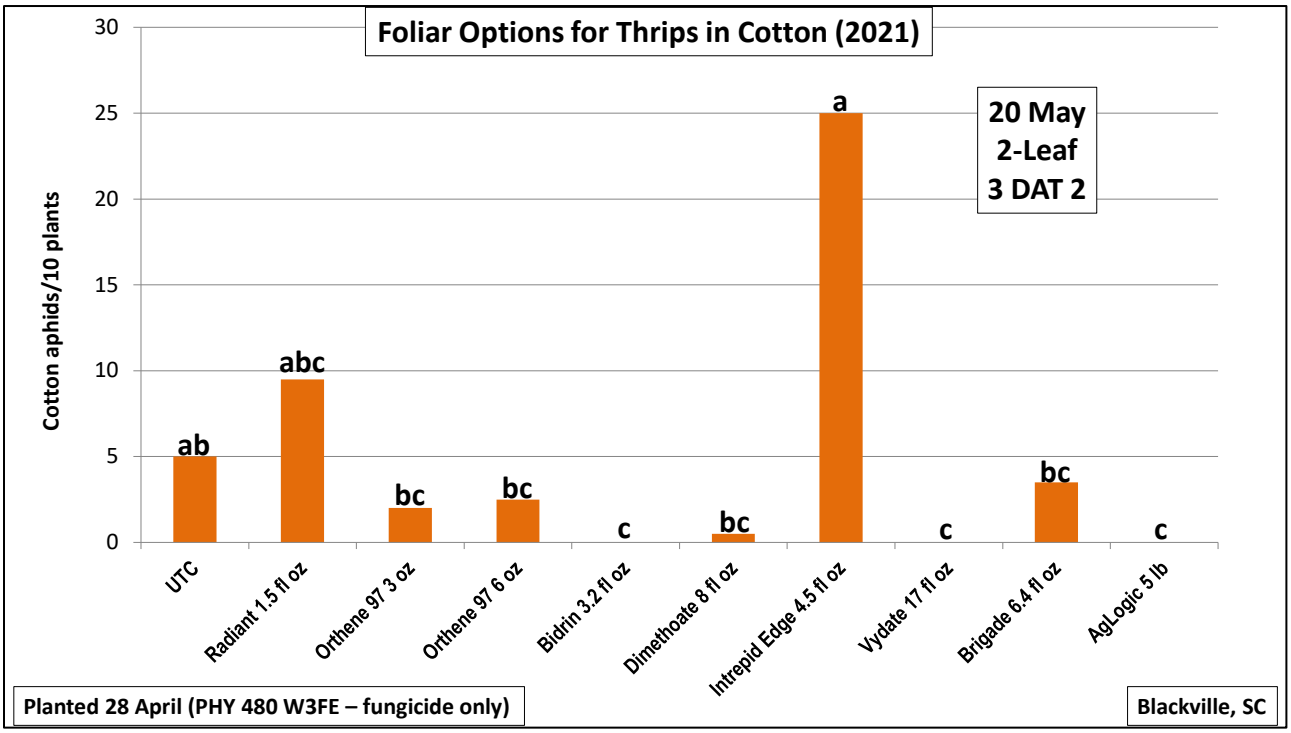


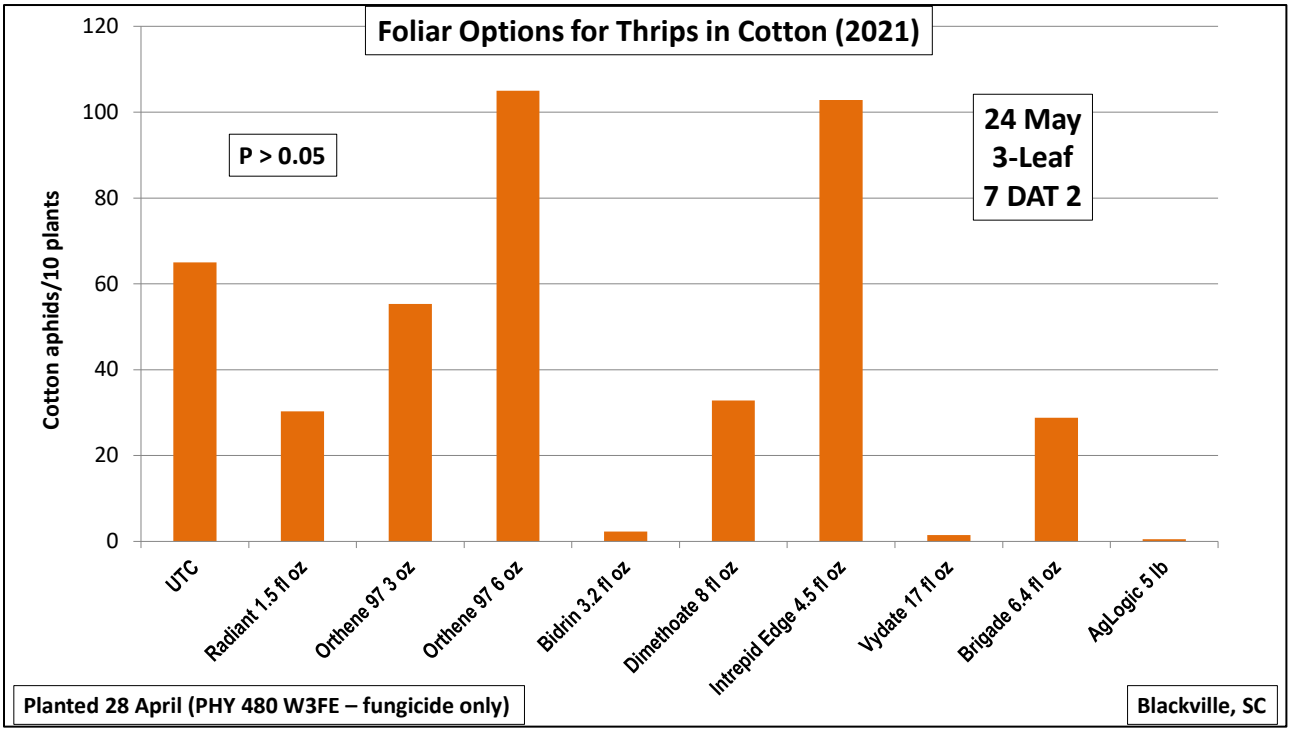




As you can see, numbers of thrips never really got out of control in this test, even in the UTC plots with plants grown from seed without any insecticide treatment and no insecticides applied post-emergence. Thrips did get relatively high in the plots I sprayed with a pyrethroid. Don't ever use a pyrethroid for control of thrips in seedling cotton. Most of the other spray options provided good control of thrips under this low-pressure scenario.

We did count cotton aphids in our thrips sampling, and those numbers are interesting and important, as we try to understand more about the cotton leaf-roll dwarf virus (CLRDV) that cotton aphids transmit to cotton. Early infestations of cotton aphids that could be infected with the virus might be more important than later colonization of the crop. So far, we have not observed widespread problems with CLRDV, but we are working with colleagues at Auburn University on this potential problem. We are pan trapping aphids all year to determine when they fly into our row-crop fields, and we are collecting early winged aphids on seedling cotton to determine what previous host they developed on in order to know more about what weed or crop hosts might also be a source for CLRDV. We observed quite a bit of variability in our last sampling, but it looks like Bidrin, Vydate, and AgLogic provided pretty good control of cotton aphids on seedling cotton (next page).





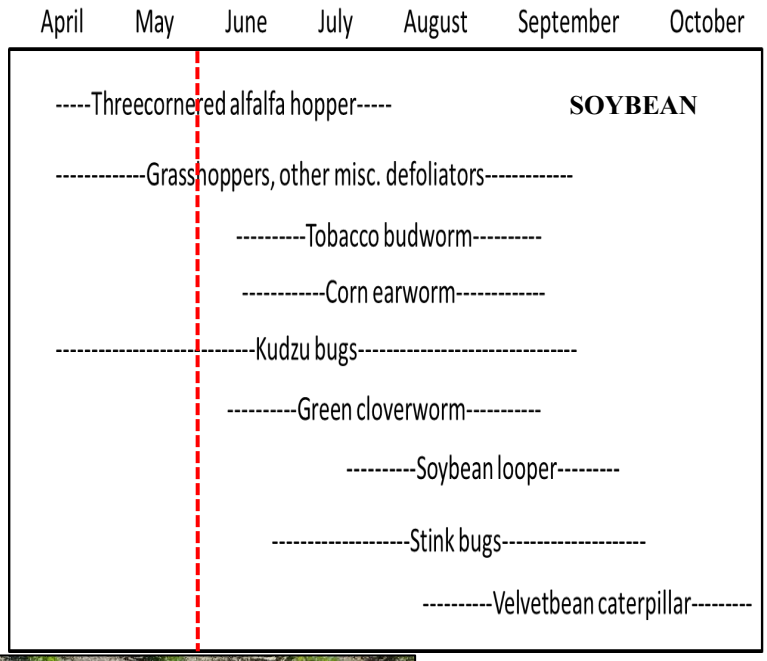
Soybean Situation

As of 23 May 2021, the USDA NASS South Carolina Statistical Office estimated that about 60% of the crop has been planted, compared with 43% the previous week, 35% at this time last year, and 33% for the 5-year average. About 42% of the crop has emerged, compared with 22% the previous week, 19% at this time last year, and 17% for the 5-year average. These are observed/perceived state-wide averages.

Soybean Insects

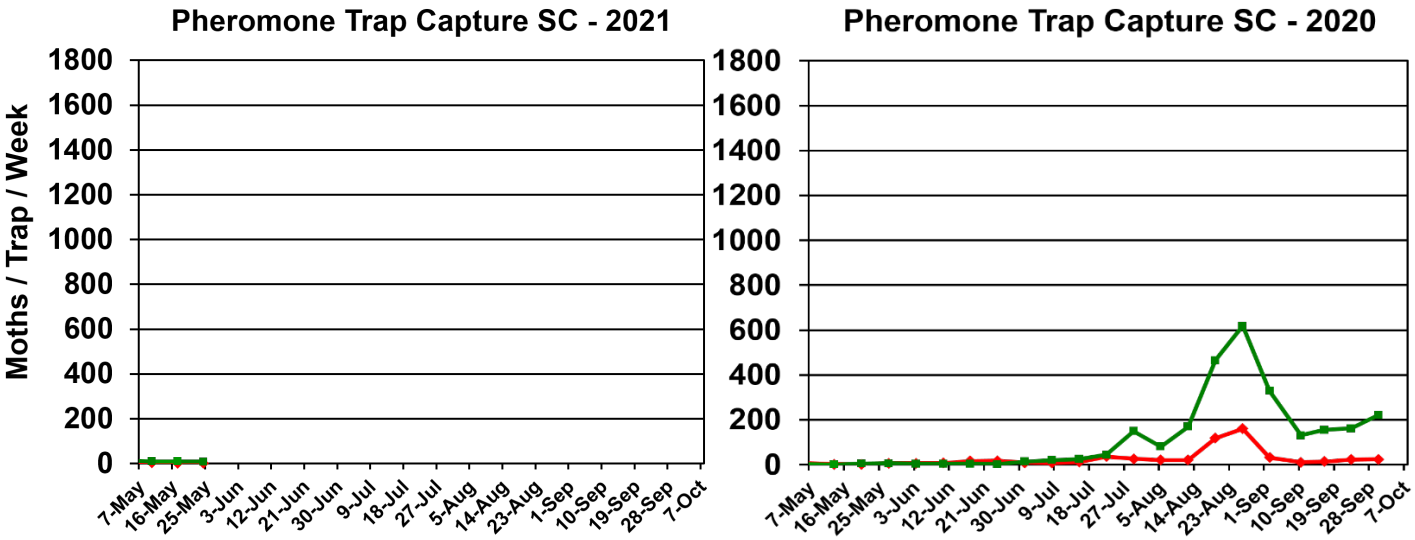
The hot, dry weather is the big problem right now for seedling soybeans, as are deer. We desparately need some rain on our dryland acres, and Mother Nature certainly helps out our irrigated acres also.

There are not many insect problems being reported, but the usual suspects, such as grasshoppers, plant hoppers, kudzu bugs, and lesser cornstalk borers (LCB), are about it for now. Enjoy the lull in insect pressure, but don't totally ignore vegetative soybeans. There are insects in these soybeans shown below, but you have to go scout to see if a problem is developing.

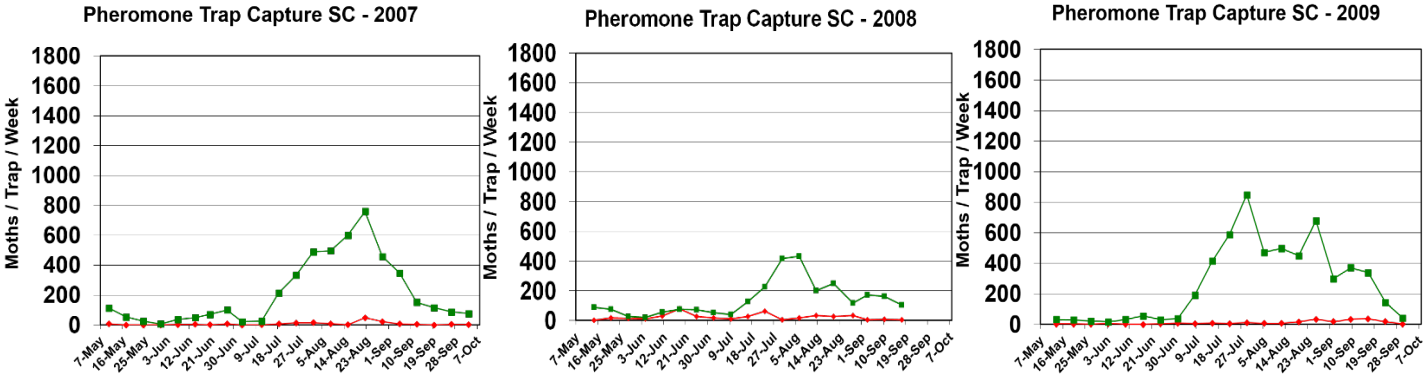


Bollworm & Tobacco Budworm

Captures of bollworm (BW) and tobacco budworm (TBW) moths in pheromone traps at EREC this season are shown below, as are the captures from 2007-2020 for reference. Tobacco budworm continues to be important for our soybean acres and for any acres of non-Bt cotton. I provide these data as a measure of moth presence and activity in our local area near my research plots. The numbers are not necessarily representative of the species throughout the state.



Trap data from 2007-2019 are shown below for reference to other years of trapping data from EREC:



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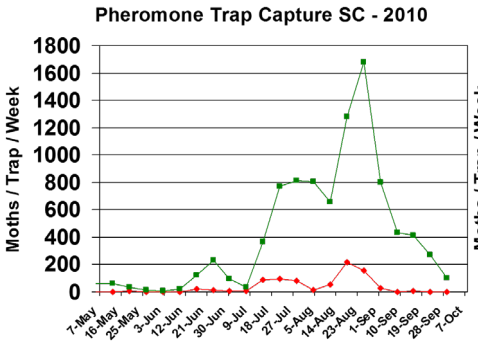
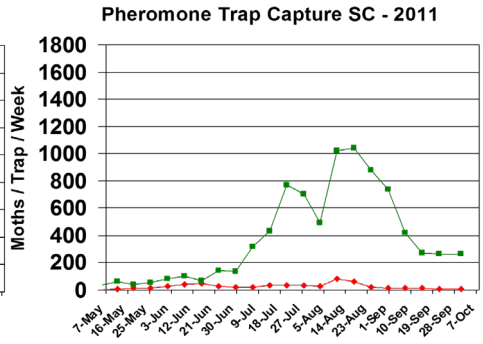
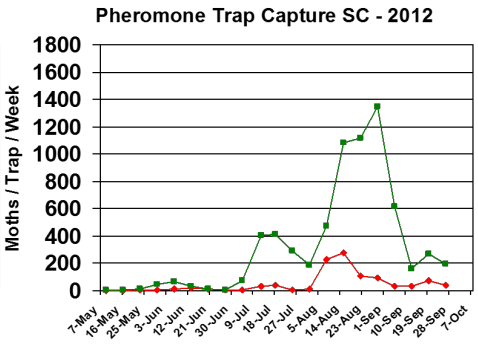
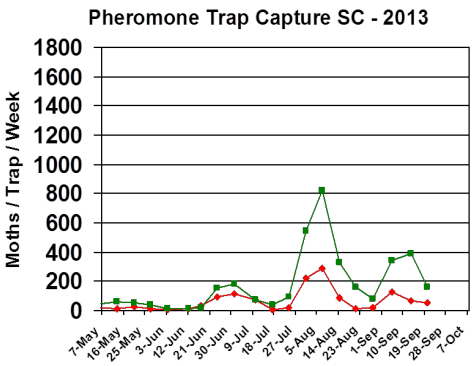
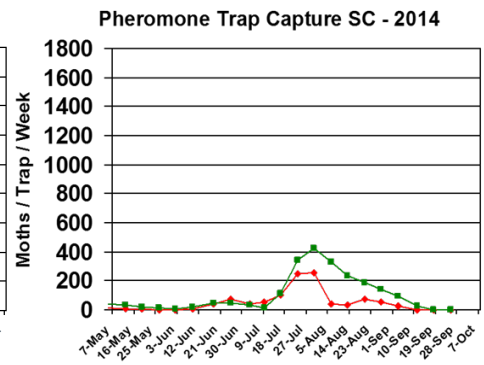
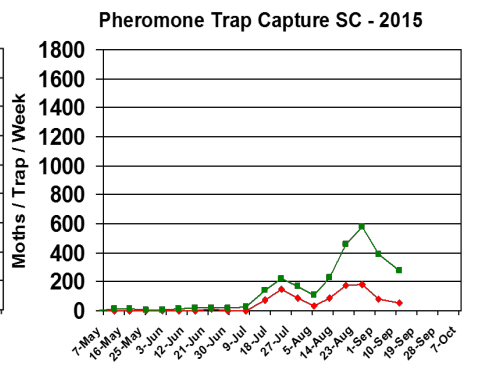


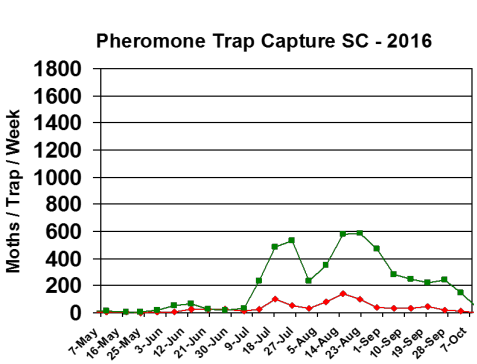


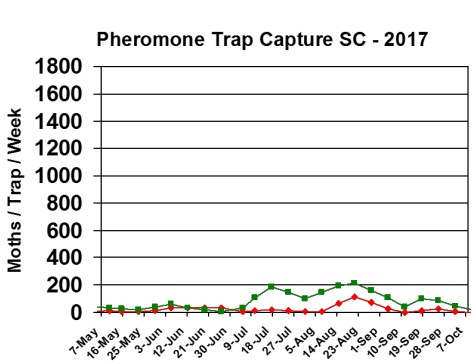


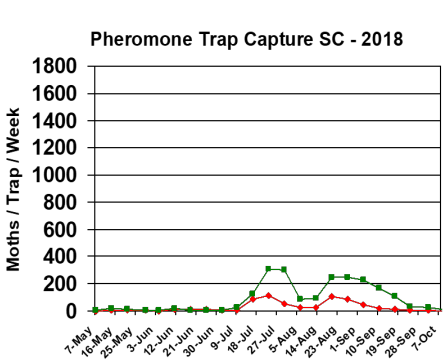


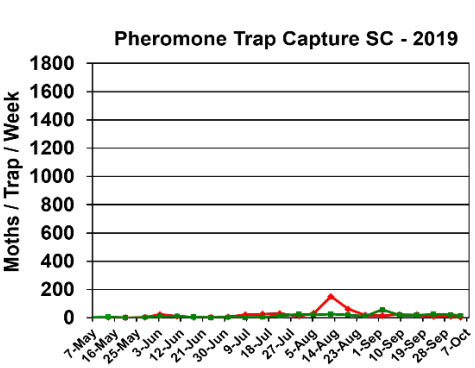








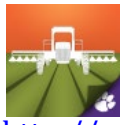




Pest Management Handbook – 2021

Insect control recommendations are available online in the 2021 South Carolina Pest Management Handbook at:
https://www.clemson.edu/extension/agronomy/pest%20management%20handbook.html

Free Mobile Apps: "Calibrate My Sprayer" and "Mix My Sprayer"



Download our free mobile apps called "Calibrate My Sprayer" and "Mix My Sprayer" that help check for proper calibration of spraying equipment and help you with mixing user-defined pesticides, respectively, in custom units (available in both iOS and Android formats):
http://www.clemson.edu/extension/mobile-apps/

Need More Information?

For more Clemson University Extension information: http://www.clemson.edu/extension/

For historical cotton/soybean insect newsletters:
https://www.clemson.edu/extension/agronomy/cotton1/newsletters.html

Sincerely,

Jeremy K. Greene, Ph.D.
Professor of Entomology

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